

The Blue-Topped Boots.

When I started working for Peter Nixon in Glendower's Land in Montana, on his ranch about twenty miles northeast of Glendive, I was a young man twenty years old, fresh from the east...

When he rode away toward Glendive and left me in charge of the ranch, I was standing on top of a haystack, forking down fodder to a small bunch of heifers...

The day was in early April. Things had been shut up tight by a hard frost following rain, and although a little fresh snow had fallen in the night, I could hear the clattering of their hooves before I gave any notice to them...

The first I saw of the men they were abreast of me in the road, about seventy yards away, and I don't suppose I should have turned to look especially at them, if they had not pulled up suddenly...

The moment I turned full front to them they yelled in a sort of confused chorus, as if of recognition, and I made out some cries that I had heard before...

They meant me! I looked down at my boots. They meant me! But I was not scared. I thought they intended to play some practical joke on me, because my boots were so beautiful and unusual and conspicuous...

While these easy reflections were in my mind, the tips of the wings of the cavalcade met on the other side of the haystack. The thirteen riders halted at about even distances apart, all facing inward, and so the man with gun held ready to lift for shooting...

I took a jocular expression of countenance, for it seemed the judicious thing to do, although the men looked anything but pleasant. Of course they wouldn't let on that they were in good humor, I reflected if hazing was their game...

'Come down out of that!' a big grey beard commanded. 'Not much I said I, grinning. 'Oh, what's the use?' cried a young, gaunt man, impatiently, and lifted his rifle. 'Let him have it right now!'

'None of that, Jake!' cried the big man, grabbing the uplifted barrel. 'There's been shooting enough. Hanging is the thing. We've engaged to fetch him to the big oak, too!'

'By gracious, it's his internal fool-grin I can't stand!' shrieked the gaunt young man. 'Come down out of that or I'll plunk—oh—wow!'

I heard this last expression, which sounded like a great guffaw, while I was coming down, which was quite unmediated by me, for I had been brandishing my pitchfork at the gaunt young joker, as I thought him, when a riat came over my head and my peculiar forearm. In the next two seconds I was jerked down violently from the haystack, fell hard on the ground, and lay half stunned, with all the wind knocked out of me.

Before I could even try to spring up, three or four—I don't know exactly how many, strong men had grabbed me; my hands were tied together behind my back with what felt like wire and was white; and I was hoisted up on an old crow-bait of Nixon's that had been calmly witnessing the proceedings. The men halted, him with a riat and led him away, I being barely able to sit up on his razor back. Two of the 'jokers' rode ahead, two beside me, and the rest trailed behind. So far as I could see, all seemed very ready to shoot.

It seemed to me that I was hurt internally. It any rate, they had led me about half a mile before I was able to remonstrate, which I did as jocularly as I could, for I supposed I might earn a valuable reputation for 'sand' by taking the hazing pleasantly.

'You fellows are too smart with the rope!' I said. 'If you'd played fair, I'd have kept the crowd off with the pitchfork—but your life—'

The man on my right the gaunt young rider so quick to anger swung the back of

his left hand against my mouth before I could finish. This was too much. With my lips bleeding and smashed, I cried out, 'Say you needn't think I'm going to stand this sort of thing! Not much! You're going too far! Striking me like that! You're a brute! Just let my hands free and—'

Then he backhanded my nose, and the man on my left punched me in the ribs, and I stopped my challenge and fell at once into fear.

Not a laugh had come from any man in the cavalcade since I saw them first. What if they were not countering those savage looks? Were they in earnest? Did they then, mistake me for some horse thief? If so, I was in danger of being hung soon, I thought, for Nixon had told me that such had been the end of three horse-thieves in the region. I at once began expostulating in a new tone.

'What's the matter?' I asked what am I accused of? I've only been here two days I'm from Wisconsin, and I've been working for Nixon right along. There's some mistake.'

The gaunt, fierce young man on my right looked down at my boots with an evil grin. None of the others seemed to give my questions any attention.

In vain I varied my questions; no reply was made, unless looks of increasing anger and disgust could be called replies. Finally the big greybeard, who was one of the two riding ahead of me, turned savagely and said, 'You infernal murdering villain, I'll gag you if you don't shut up! Shut up! And I did but not before the young man had again swung the back of his hand against my mouth. With that I ceased to speak and sobbed.

'Do you mind Jim's woman, how she cried over him last night?' said the young man, speaking to his comrade across my front with an air of intense loathing and contempt for me.

A murder had been committed yesterday, then! And I was supposed to be the slayer!

In horror I spoke out again: 'Great heavens, men, don't hang an innocent person! But before I had quite finished, the big man turned, and the fierce young man seized me by the back of the neck and held me while the greybeard jammed a quadrupled section of lariat into my mouth, after tying its ends together with rawhide thongs which he finally tied behind my head. It almost choked me, the taste was sickening and I thought I should faint with pain and terror. Now I could not even plead for my life.

They took me two miles farther, and then I saw the river and a much larger company of men under a solitary great oak tree. The big greybeard had already galloped forward, and I supposed he had told the others the murderer was captured, for a man was out on a long, low branch fixing a dangling rope.

As I came near it, I struggled to release my arms, and made some sound with my mouth, trying to shriek protestations of innocence and demands that Nixon be brought; but they gave me little attention, and I could effect nothing until they pulled me down from the horse. Then I took them by surprise, for I began a series of kicks and before they had knocked me down and bound my legs, the fierce young man, who had struck me three times, was doubled up holding his stomach with his two hands and gasping, while two others were little better off.

'Pretty good for a man with his hands tied!' said the greybeard, appreciatively. 'First time I ever see a regular murdering villain that was so game. I'd feel like giving him a square trial if it wasn't a clear waste of time; and with that he looked back at my blue topped boots.

'Aint he got 'em on?' said another. 'Let him die in 'em, seeing he killed Jim in 'em!'

Then I guessed the truth quite accurately. In fact, an unknown man in blue topped boots had killed Jim Sutherland, general favorite, near the door of Jim's own house on the river front, with no witnesses except the poor wife and two little children. Blue-topped boots were rare, and I corresponded in all respects to the description of a smooth-faced young man with blue topped boots, which the distracted widow had given to the collected avengers.

In ten minutes I should have been a dead bay, had not Nixon come galloping toward the tree. Somebody on his head had told him that the river-front was up looking for a smooth-faced young murderer in blue-topped boots, and he had instantly guessed what might happen to me.

Even his testimony did not easily prevail. But when he had told them again and again that I had been with him all the previous day, and just how I had been tinkering at a plow when the murder occurred, the men freed me, and the greybeard voiced the general sentiment with, 'Young man, we're mighty glad we didn't hang ye, especially as the other feller in fool boots might have got off along of your hanging! We've got to fetch him!'

And then the fierce youth apologized for striking me, and offered to fight me in any convenient way I might choose, if the apology did not satisfy me, which it did.

Now that's a true story, and a queer story, but there is queerer to come, and it is true, too.

About a week after that, I was sent by Nixon to square some logs out on the bluff at the big bend at McGilligan's Creek. Early in the morning, just after I got to work, a man sneaked up in the bushes and covered with a Winchester before I knew he was there. He made me hold up my hands, and then he came out of the undergrowth—a young, starved man, with a stubby young beard and blue topped boots.

He took the cold snack I had brought with me for lunch, ate it ravenously, and then asked me the news of the neighborhood. I told him the story of my blue-topped boots.

'Well, sir, to see that fellow roar, laughing at it—he almost lay down! Then he looked seriously at his own blue tops. And finally, he told me to keep on at my

work mighty steady, for he would be in the bushes watching and would 'plunk' me if I neglected my duty to my employer, as that would be wrong.

When it was near noon, it suddenly struck me that the young man might not be in the bushes watching me. In fact, he was not. He had probably 'made tracks' as soon as he saw me back at work. I hurried to Nixon's as soon as I was sure of this, and the river-front men were hot after the fugitive early in the afternoon. But they found only the blue tops of his boots, which he had cut off and left in the bushes.

I am not entirely sure of the fate of the unknown murderer, but it is certain that the skeleton and clothing of a man who had probably starved to death were found about forty miles from us, in a secluded gully, the next winter. And the tops of his boots had been cut off. Nobody in our neighborhood knew of this until it was too late to try whether the blue tops, which Nixon keeps to this day, would fit the shortened uppers, but I have little doubt that the murderer had died in his cut-offs.

Such is the story that was told to me on the morning of August 16, 1899, by a Montana man, with whom I conversed on the journey from Montreal.

A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

Fatetic Incident Related by Wellman, the Arctic Explorer.

Haunted by peril, gloom and mystery, the Arctic regions seem the native home of tragedy. But among all the strange incidents of which they have been the scene few appeal more powerfully to the imagination than one recently related by Walter Wellman in his article, 'A Race for the North Pole.' It reads like some grim imagining of De Maupassant or Poe; but it was a simple fact.

Volunteers had been called for among Mr. Wellman's men to hold a little, lone outpost station during the Arctic winter. But two were desired to take charge of the sledges, dogs and other equipments it was his intention to leave there; and the men chosen were Bert Benzen, formerly with Nansen on the Fram, and Paul Bjorvig, his neighbor at home. They were warm friends, and delighted to remain together. Late in October the rest of the party left him.

On the 26th of the next February Mr. Wellman, hurrying on ahead, saw their little snow hut again, and a roughly clad man, his face blackened with seal oil smoke hastening from it to meet him.

'Bjorvig, how are you?' 'I am well, sir, but—poor Benzen is dead.'

They clasped hands for a moment in silence; then weeping, laughing and talking all at once, in the hysterical relief of companionship, the poor soul told his story—a noble story of a noble friendship it was, although to him it seemed, plainly as natural and simple as it was tragic.

He had then been alone for two months; Benzen, after a long illness during which he was frequently delirious, had died in his arms the day after New Year's.

When Mr. Wellman asked where he had buried his friend's body, his reply was; 'I had not buried him, sir, pointing to the dark end of the hut. He lies in there.'

'Why did you not bury him, Paul?' 'Because sir, I promised him I wouldn't.' This promise he had given to soothe Benzen's dread lest the bears and foxes should unearth his body, if it were interred only in the snow; and in the iron-hard soil no other grave was possible at that season.

'I shall never forget that moment,' says Mr. Wellman. 'At first the words did not appear to me to mean very much—only that a dead man had not been buried. Gradually the full proportions of the tragedy dawned on my consciousness. This man with the black face, who was cutting up walrus meat and feeding the fire, had been compelled to pass two months of the Arctic night in this cavern with no other companion than the body of his friend.'

'I lit a little oil-lamp,—a bicycle lamp it was,—and made my way to the dark end of the hut. On the floor at my feet lay a one-man sleeping-bag, empty, with a blanket tumbled over it, and showing signs of occupancy the night before. Just beyond, within arm's reach lay a similar bag. This one was occupied. The flap at the top had been pulled carefully over the face of the sleeper within. Bag and contents were frozen as hard as a rock. There, side by side, the quick and the dead had slept for eight weeks!'

And the dead man had deserved his friend's fidelity.

'That was hardest of all for me,' said Bjorvig, 'when poor Benzen was out of his head, and I couldn't do anything for him. Once he caught me crying, though I tried not to let him see, and he brightened up and said, "Paul, what's the matter with you? I'm all right. I'll be well in a week or two. See what an appetite I have." And he got and boiled some coffee and ooked some bacon, and sat here eating and laughing, just to cheer me up, and then he fell over in a faint. I dragged him to his bag and—and he's there yet.'

Under the lee of a great rock the body of this brave man was at last buried, and a cairn of rocks built over it. The mercury fell that day to forty four below zero; and the task done, all had sought shelter in the hut, when they missed Bjorvig. They found him still at his friend's grave, toiling to pack the chinks tight and safe, and place at the head a cross, with name and date inscribed upon it; and although this work kept him several hours in that frightful cold, he would not leave it till it was done.

Bad for a Cough. Adamson's Botanic Cough Balsam is bad for a cough. In fact it kills a cough almost instantly and restores good normal health almost instantly and in a very agreeable manner. No cough can withstand it. 25c. all Druggists.

'I see,' she said, 'they claim there is now a sure cure for baldness. Don't you think you'd better try it?' 'I'm sater as it is, don't you think?' Le answered insinuatingly.

However, this only bore out the assertion she had frequently made that he was too mean to be blessed with a wife.

In the rush at the bargain counter a woman faints. The other women regard her interestedly, but with noticeable aversion. 'How extremely mannish!' they exclaim, and shrug their shoulders, and proceed with their shopping. For after all it is the thoroughly womanly woman who commands the esteem of her own sex.

BORN.

- Wolvite, May 27, to the wife of E. A. Brown, a son. Sheburne, May 23, to the wife of Geo. Dehnstadt, a son. Amberst, May 25, to the wife of Frank Purchase, a son. Weymouth, May 23, to the wife of Daniel Toney, a son. Kenville, May 25, to the wife of Peter Innes, a son. Dalhousie, May 13, to the wife of Amos Hannam, a son. Dalhousie, May 8, to the wife of Samuel Hannam, a son. Kenville, May 23, to Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Herbert, a son. Oxford, May 23, to the wife of J. Allison DeWolfe, a daughter. Parrboro, May 24, to the wife of Osborne Forbes, a son. Truro, May 21, to the wife of R. Beirnam Hill, a daughter. Windsor, May 21, to the wife of H. P. Scott, a daughter. Northfield, May 23, to the wife of Geo. Cashman, a daughter. Digby, May 26, to the wife of M. H. VanTassel, a daughter. Margareville, May 16, to the wife of Hugh Murtagh, a daughter. Halls, May 19, to the wife of Cornelius Riordan, a daughter. Truro, May 23, to the wife of Wilbert A. Creelman, a daughter. Margareville, May 11, to Mr. and Mrs. Littlefield, a son. Bridgetown, May 21, to the wife of Herbert Marston, a daughter. Oromocto, May 27, to the wife of Rev. Horace X. Dible, a son. Smyrna, May 13, to the wife of H. Wilmer Robinson, a daughter. Kenville, May 24, to Mr. and Mrs. Brenton Barnaby, a daughter. St. Peter's, C. B., May 27, to the wife of A. D. Beale, a daughter. Fort Hawkesburr, May 27, to the wife of F. H. Monticello, Me., May 18, to the wife of Norman St. Ann's, C. B., May 17, to the wife of John B. Buchanan, a daughter. Fort Lawrence, May 24, to the wife of Steven Meagher's Grant, Halifax Co., May 23, to Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Dillman, a son. Bedford, May 24, to Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sanford, triplets—two sons and a daughter.

MARRIED.

- St. Paul Miss., by Rev. H. Knox, Fred. D. Hall, to Sadie A. Fashley. Matilda, by Rev. J. S. McArthur, Fred L. Woodworth, to Mary Dedeid. Truro, May 17, by Rev. John Wood, Fred J. Morrison, to Maggie E. Isenor. Cornwallis, by Rev. J. M. Wade, James W. Hawksworth, to Florence Croso. Truro, May 22, by Rev. F. Kinless, John McKinnon, to Florence Burke. Amberst, May 23, by Rev. V. E. Harris, Emma Lamy, to Edgar Tremblay. Yarmouth, May 29, by Rev. A. W. Mahon, D. L. Roberts, to Nellie G. Stuart. Yarmouth, May 6, by Rev. E. D. Miller, Daniel L. Stewart, to Cassie L. Robson. Springside, May 24, by Rev. John Gee, Herbert I. Chambers, to Annie Cargoes. St. Stephen, May 23, by Rev. Wm. D. Hard, T. I. Byrne, to Henrietta B. Ross. Digby, May 26, by Rev. E. H. Thomas, Orrie Wm. Specht, to Ida Maude Height. New Hampshire, May 28, by Rev. Geo. E. Street, John Knoll, to Agnes Miller. St. Stephen, May 23, by Rev. John Calder, Jacob Lasson, to Mary Sutherland. St. Stephen, May 23, by Rev. F. W. Robertson, H. S. Felch, to Alice S. Graham. Yarmouth, May 29, by Rev. H. W. Brown, John H. Huribut to Elizabeth Raynard. St. Stephen, May 16, by Rev. F. W. Robertson, R. Eugene Clark, to Bessie K. Wetmore. Lockport, May 12, by Rev. D. Lucas Hammons, Venus E. Simmons, to Mary J. Burke. Upper Miquodobelt, May 24, by Rev. J. W. Thompson, John Reid to Lillian Farrell. Brookline, Mass., May 17, by Rev. Mr. Storr, E. Ernest Wetmore, to Fannie M. Thompson. Graham's Siding, Col. Co., May 24, by Rev. R. L. Coffe, Samuel Archibald, to Lois M. Brenton.

DIED.

- Windsor, May 24, John Baker, 76. Halifax, May 29, John Adams, 62. St. John, May 22, John Stewart, 70. Morell, June 4, John McVish, 74. Lakesville, May 30, Clark Forter, 61. Dartmouth, May 29, John Cribby, 63. Hopedale, May 24, Jane Macleod, 76. Halifax, May 26, George Strachan, 27. Bass River, May 26, Woodbury Falton. Halifax, May 24, Lorenzo Matheson, 23. Halifax, May 26, Hycinth H. Fuller, 72. Callville, May 10, Miss Mary E. Black. Halifax, May 23, William Davis, 9 days. Boston, Mass., May 15, George Grant, 60. Halifax, May 26, Winsfield Vaughan, 46. Halifax, May 27, Mrs. Margaret Reid, 40.

- New Germany, May 23, Mrs. K. J. Davis. Halifax, May 26, Philip O'Hara, 6 months. Truro, May 29, Capt. Leader J. Yell, 57. Newton Mills, May 23, Mrs. George Falton. Halifax, May 27, Sarah J. Hudson, 3 months. Yarmouth, May 20, Capt. Henry Webster, 60. Bonaventure, May 14, Frances Wilson, 2. Seal Island, May 26, Mr. Robert R. Hogg, 67. River John, May 14, Thos. Brimley Gould, 76. Dorchester, Mass., May 21, James M. Bennett. Salspringe, May 19, Mrs. Mary McMaisters, 66. Halifax, May 26, Florence E. Wilson, 2 months. Halifax, May 26, Sarah, wife of Willard Wilder. Charleston, Mass., May 23, Charles Madden, 75. Halifax, Elizabeth, wife of Joseph H. Purdy, 47. Dorchester, Mass., May 15, Roderick Mackenzie. Halifax, May 29, Ellen, wife of John McDonald. Halifax, May 28, Margaret, wife of John MacKay, 27. Duffryn, May 23, Laura I. wife of Frank I. Brown, 49. Tupper Hill, May 21, Eleanor Louisa McDonald, 7 months. North Sydney, May Agnes S. wife of John MacLeod, 54. Halifax, May 27, Ellen, wife of Douglas S'aughtenwhite, 20. Ware, Mass., May 23, Sarah, wife of Thomas F. Kelly, 56. Liverpool, May 19, Elizabeth, widow of Moses Abbott, 84. Halifax, May 26, Caroline, widow of Capt. W. Linsgow, 75. New Glasgow, May 24, George G. child of S. G. Tupper, 1 year. Roxbury, Mass., May 18, Sarah, wife of Cathbert Bonchouse, 51. Pictou, May 12, Elizabeth McKenzie, widow of Capt. John G. English. Albion, May 19, Mary M. infant daughter of William and Mary Carroll.

RAILROADS.

CANADIAN PACIFIC SUMMER TOURS

Commence June 1st. Write for 1900 Tour Book. The Famous Fast Train

'Imperial Limited'

To the Pacific Coast will be put in service commencing June 11th, 1900

NEW ROUTE TO QUEBEC

Commencing June 5th, there will be a combination first class and sleeping car leave St. John at 4:10 p. m. week days, and run through to Lewis, P. Q., via Megantic.

A. J. HEATH, D. F. A. C. P. R., St. John, N. B.

Dominion Atlantic R'y.

On and after Monday, Feb. 6th, 1900, the Steamship and Train service of this railway will be as follows:

Royal Mail S. S. Prince Rupert.

ST. JOHN AND DIGBY. Lvs. St. John at 7:00 a. m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Sat. day; arr. Digby 10:00 a. m. Returning leaves Digby same days at 12:50 p. m., arr. at St. John, 2:35 p. m.

EXPRESS TRAINS

Daily (Sunday excepted). Lvs. Halifax 6:30 a. m., arr. in Digby 12:30 p. m. Lvs. Digby 12:45 p. m., arr. Yarmouth 3:30 p. m. Lvs. Yarmouth 9:00 a. m., arr. Digby 11:45 a. m. Lvs. Digby 11:45 a. m., arr. Halifax 5:50 p. m. Lvs. Annapolis 1:00 p. m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, arr. Digby 8:50 a. m. Lvs. Digby 8:30 p. m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, arr. Annapolis 4:40 p. m.

S. S. Prince Arthur.

YARMOUTH AND BOSTON SERVICE. By far the finest and fastest steamer plying out of Boston. Leaves Yarmouth, N. S. Wednesday, and Saturday immediately on arrival of the Express Train from Halifax arriving in Boston early next morning. Returning leaves Long Wharf, Boston, Tuesday, and Friday at 4:00 p. m. Unequalled cuisine on Dominion Atlantic Railway Steamers and Palace Car Express Trains. Staterooms can be obtained on application to City Agent. Close connections with trains at Digby. Tickets on sale at City Office, 114 Prince William Street, at the wharf office, 2 from the Furzer on steamer, from whom time-tables and all information can be obtained. F. GIFFKINS, superintendent, Kentville, N. S.

Intercolonial Railway

On and after SUNDAY, January 14th, 1900, trains will run daily (Sundays excepted) as follows:—

TRAINS WILL LEAVE ST. JOHN

- Suburban for Hampton.....8:30 Express for Campbellton, Fergusham, Pictou and Halifax.....7:35 Express for Halifax, New Glasgow and Pictou.....12:05 Express for Sussex.....15:40 Express for Quebec, Montreal.....11:20 Accommodation for Moncton, Truro, Halifax and Sydney.....22:10 A sleeping car will be attached to the train leaving St. John at 11:30 o'clock for Quebec and Montreal. Passengers transfer at Moncton. A sleeping car will be attached to the train leaving St. John at 22:10 o'clock for Truro and Halifax. Vestibule, Dining and Sleeping cars on the Quebec and Montreal express.

TRAINS WILL ARRIVE AT ST. JOHN

- Suburban from Hampton.....7:14 Express from Sussex.....8:30 Express from Quebec and Montreal.....12:20 Express from Halifax.....15:00 Express from Halifax.....19:16 Accommodation from Moncton.....24:45 All trains are run by Eastern Standard time. Twenty-four hour notation.

D. POTTINGER, Gen. Manager. Moncton, N. B., Jan. 9, 1900. CITY TICKET OFFICE, 7 King Street St. John, N. B.